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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 000676

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [RS](#) [IR](#) [IS](#) [ISRAELI](#) [PALESTINIAN](#) [AFFAIRS](#) [GOI](#) [EXTERNAL](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAELI MOD POLDIR GILAD DISCUSSES THE AMA AND THE FUTURE OF THE PA

REF: TEL AVIV 0497

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Summary: In a meeting on February 13, Israeli MOD Political Director Amos Gilad agreed with the Ambassador that progress should be made on as many AMA issues as possible before Hamas assumes control of the Palestinian Authority, but expressed concern about what he termed the lack of a Palestinian partner. Gilad also agreed that the GOI would provide greater details concerning its complaints about the Rafah border crossing to the EU-Border Assistance Mission. Contrary to public positions of some GOI officials, he praised Egypt's actions to prevent smuggling along the Philadelphia corridor. He predicted that PA President Mahmud Abbas will relinquish control of the PA security services, cautioned against providing international advisers to Abbas, and said that former Civil Affairs Minister Muhammad Dahlan is losing power. Gilad also mentioned that Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov had told DefMin Shaul Mofaz that the Iranians are pursuing nuclear weapons and that Russia is skeptical that sanctions will stop them. End summary.

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Making Progress on Rafah and other AMA Issues  
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2. (C) The Ambassador stressed the importance of moving forward with as many Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) issues as possible before a new Hamas-led government assumes power in the PA. He said that the Consul General had raised the GOI's complaints about implementation of the Rafah agreements (reftel) directly with the PA. U.S. Security Coordinator LTG Dayton had also discussed Israeli concerns with EU-BAM chief MG Pietro Pistolese. Gilad agreed with this approach, noting that MOD Adviser BG Baruch Spiegel would meet with Pistolese later that day to discuss Rafah in greater detail. At the Ambassador's urging, Gilad agreed to instruct Spiegel to provide the EU-BAM and PA with as many details of the complaints as possible. USSC Chief of Staff Col. Dugger added that the Security Working Group (SWG) will convene on February 22. Gilad emphasized the importance of the SWG's developing a list of prohibited items.

3. (C) The Ambassador undertook to examine with USAID the possibility of returning a U.S. technical adviser to Rafah or Kerem Shalom. Gilad suggested a follow-up meeting with the Ambassador during the week of February 19.

4. (C) The Ambassador asked whether the GOI has had any contact with the PA on AMA issues. Gilad replied that "bilaterally we can't do anything" because of the victory by Hamas in PLC elections. He cautioned that Hamas will "take over quickly" after the PLC convenes on February 18, a situation he said will significantly increase the difficulties of implementing AMA issues. He repeated his previously-stated view that the November 15 agreements "had no partners."

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Gilad's Views of the PA and Praise for the Egyptians  
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5. (C) Gilad predicted that President Abbas will relinquish control of the PA security forces to the new PA government in the hopes that Hamas will prove incapable of maintaining order. In his analysis, this plan is doomed to failure and could lead Abbas to resign and be replaced by a member of Hamas.

6. (C) Gilad claimed that former PA Civil Affairs Minister Dahlan is "very isolated and weak," noting that Dahlan had lost the fight for leadership of Fatah's caucus in the PLC to Azzam Al-Ahmad, an old-guard member supported by President Abbas, and has only one powerful ally -- Rashid Abu Shabak -- on his side. Gilad urged the international community not to place too much faith in what Dahlan tells them, commenting that "Dahlan is like drugs; what he tells you sounds better than reality."

7. (C) Gilad said that DefMin Mofaz will discuss the future of the PA with President Hosni Mubarak, DefMin Mohamed Tantawi, and EGIS chief Omar Soliman when he travels to Cairo on February 14. Gilad praised the Egyptian Border Guards for interdicting smugglers and weapons along the Philadelphia

corridor. He advocated stronger Israeli ties with Egypt and Jordan, expressing concern that the Egyptians have withdrawn almost all of their advisers from Gaza.

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Future of the USSC  
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18. (C) Gilad was skeptical that the Palestinians would be able to improve the security situation in the areas under their control. He claimed that EU Middle East envoy Marc Otte had told him that the Europeans have frozen the EU-COPPS program. Referring to the Quartet's meeting on January 30, the Ambassador noted that the USSC still has a valuable role to play in the region. Col. Dugger described ongoing planning that could strengthen the role of both the Palestinian National Security Council and President Abbas. Gilad was pessimistic that Abbas would ever exercise real control over the PA forces. He warned that international advisers would be unsuccessful in convincing Abbas to take necessary steps and that such a failure could embarrass the international community.

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Russian-Israeli DefMins Discuss Iran and Hamas  
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19. (C) According to Gilad, Russian DefMin Ivanov met with Mofaz at the recent NATO summit and told him candidly that Russia has "no doubt" that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons program. Ivanov reportedly denied any Russian involvement in the program and continued to express doubt about the efficacy of sanctions. Gilad said the Russians had also said they want to "convince Hamas" to accept the international community's conditions on forming a PA government. The Ambassador emphasized that the USG remains committed to the three conditions issued by the Quartet. Gilad claimed that Ivanov criticized U.S. democratization initiatives for destabilizing the region.

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